

This *New York Times*' Letter to the Editor was sent to Chairman Martin, All of the Commissioners and their staff on October 23, 2006.

Phones and Hearing Aids (1 Letter)

Published: October 23, 2006

To the Editor:

Re "The Quagmire of Making International Cellphone Calls," by Joe Sharkey (On the Road column, Business Day, Oct. 17):

If Mr. Sharkey thought he had difficulty deciphering the international cellphone networks, he should try buying a cellphone that works with hearing aids.

Effective Sept. 16, the Federal Communications Commission mandates that cellphone providers must offer at least two handset models that have a minimum M3/T3 rating. The M rating (M3 or 4) represents microphone interference on a hearing aid and the T rating (T3 or 4) represents the hearing aid telecoil compatibility level. The higher the rating, the better.

My daughter needs an M4/T4 rating. But M4/T4 is available only in the C.D.M.A. technology and not in G.S.M., which my daughter will need this summer in Europe. C.D.M.A. does not work in Europe.

Two G.S.M. providers, Cingular and T-Mobile, have said M4/T4 is not achievable. But one has to wonder if cellphone carriers are allocating sufficient resources to overcome this hurdle. How come they are able to put a camera, MP3 player and every other imaginable device in a cellphone, but they cannot overcome this hurdle?

While the network issue may be confusing for Mr. Sharkey, at

least he has options. People who wear hearing aids do not.

Janice Schacter □ New York, Oct. 17, 2006

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